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Abstract

In this article I investigate the migration flux of Jews between Rhodes and Buenos Aires in a period marked by the political transition from the Ottoman imperial to Italian (semi)colonial rule. Migration overseas, a phenomenon that sees no clear rupture before and after the occupation of the island by Italian troops in 1912, is treated here as a strategy broadly implemented by individuals and families from the main island of the Dodecanese, putting the experience of the migrants in the foreground, in order to better understand the practice of migration as a negotiation of their position in an interconnected social space between two continents, and avoid to subsume the features of this movement under cultural or religious categories. Using the approach of a translocal history of migration, the article is an attempt to cross-read the developing sociopolitical context of Rhodes through the pattern of movement of humans and capital.

The Jewish community of Rhodes and its mobility has been dealt with by historians starting from the 1930s, with Avram Galante's encyclopedic work on the Sephardic population of Turkey.[1] New contributions emerged in the 1970s, especially by descendants of *Rodeslis* in the Diaspora and survivors of the Holocaust, an event which marked the annihilation of a stable Jewish presence in the Dodecanese. However, migration to Argentina is briefly mentioned as a phenomenon not worth a separate analysis,[2] and it is overshadowed by the focus on migration to Congo and Rhodesia.[3] Authors often refer to previous works without adding new primary sources and hardly give accounts of personal experiences of migrants as actors. The purpose of this article is to add on differentiation through a close-up view on individuals, thus suggesting a groundwork for the analysis of the "pre-migratory world." This aspect is still downplayed in the historiography on Jewish immigration in Argentina,[4] in which the Sephardim-

[1] Galante, Avram (1986): Histoire de Juifs de Turquie, Tome 7. Istanbul: ISIS.

[2] Rahmani, Moïse (2000): Rhodes, un pan de notre mémoire. Paris: Romillat, p. 157–161; Fintz Menascé, Esther (1992): Gli Ebrei a Rodi. Storia di un'antica comunità annientata dai nazisti. Milano: Guerini e Associati, p. 217; Hirschon, Renée (2002): The Jews of Rhodes: The Decline and Extinction of an Ancient Community. In: Rozen, Minna (ed.): The Last Ottoman Century and Beyond. The Jews in Turkey and the Balkans 1808 – 1945. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, p. 291–307; Angel, Marc (1980): The Jews of Rhodes. The History of a Sephardic Community. New York: Sepher Hermon; Levy, Isaac Jack (1989): Jewish Rhodes: A Lost Culture. Berkeley: Jedah L. Magnes Museum.

[3] Hirschon, Renée (2005): Jews from Rhodes in Central and Southern Africa. In: Ember, Melvin; Ember, Carol; Skoggard, Ian (eds.): Encyclopedia of Diasporas. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, p. 925–934; Benatar, Jacqueline; Pimienta-Benatar, Myriam (2000): De Rhodes à Elisabethville. L'Odyssée d'une communauté Sepharade. Paris: S.I.I.A.C.; Schachar, Nathan (2013): The Lost World of Rhodes. Greeks, Italians, Jews, and Turks between Tradition and Modernity. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, p. 129–136. Two valuable (auto)biographic accounts focused on WWII and its aftermath are Alhadeff, Vittorio (1998): Le chêne de Rhodes. Saga d'une grande famille sépharade. Paris: Méditerranée, p. 237–262; Hazan, Martín (2009): Un día más de vida. Rodas, Auschwitz, Buenos Aires. La odisea de David Galante. Barcelona: Inédita Editores, p. 114–139. For a valuable study rich of archival references on persecution and deportation see Clementi, Marco; Toliou, Eirini (2015): Gli ultimi ebrei di Rodi. Leggi Razziali e Deportazioni nel Dodecaneso Italiano 1939-1945. Roma: DeriveApprodi.

[4] Tolcachier, Fabiana Sabina (1997): The Historiography of Jewish Immigration to Argentina: Problems and Perspectives. In: Klich, Ignacio; Lesser, Jeff (ed.): Arab and Jewish Immigrants in Latin America. Images and Realities. London and Portland: Frank Cass, p. 204–226, 220. See also: Devoto, Fernando (2003): Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana; Avni, Haim (1983): Argentina y la historia de la inmigración judía. Buenos Aires: AMIA; Mirelman, Victor A. (1988): En Busqueda de una Identidad. Los inmigrantes judíos en Buenos Aires 1890-1930. Buenos Aires: Milá; McGee Deutsch, Sandra (2010): Crossing Borders, Claiming a Nation – A History of Argentine Jewish Women 1880-1955. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

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Mediterranean Jewry, including *Rodeslis,* appears to be a "forgotten sub-group,"[5] or a "minority within the minority"[6] if compared to Ashkenazim.[7] An enquiry into biographical trajectories can be gained through the archival collection of the *Carabinieri*, the Italian police stationing in Rhodes which contains thousands of personal files. Moreover, reports from the local schools of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU) are particularly important for the last decade of Ottoman rule in Rhodes. A first insight into the post-emigrational dimension in Buenos Aires can be offered through internet sources: The digitalized database of the *Centro de Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* (CEMLA) 1960 provides a snapshot of these individuals at their landing in Buenos Aires between 1880 and 1960.[8] A sample of 214 entries will be used for a quantitative analysis that shall convey the complexity of this mobility diachronically. The main problem regarding this database is its certain incompleteness, especially in the first two decades of the 20th century: The birthplace is missing until 1923, there is no way to ascertain the faithfulness of the information provided by the migrants and there is no trace of "illegal" migration. Therefore, I have taken into account data before 1923 only in cases where other sources could, with a higher degree of certainty, cross-check the identity of the migrants. On the qualitative level, narratives of both the very migrants and their descendants can be collected not only as scattered references on printed texts, but also through the comments posted on webpages such as the Jewish Museum of Rhodes, very popular among sons and grandsons of *Rodeslis* from all over the world.

The Translocal Approach

An important question is whether a collective categorization of the migrants is possible and useful. For example, by adopting terms like Jewish immigration to Argentina or Jewish emigration from Rhodes,[9] what can be shown about how these actors were identified and how they constructed their social interaction? Actually, religion itself, as Quataert claims, was not a sufficient factor for determining individuals' self-perception in late Ottoman urbanity.[10] Moreover, in the period analyzed, cultural and political identification offers ranged from Ottomanism to the French influence of the *Alliance* and the local Catholic High School, from *Italianità* fostered through governmental efforts after 1912 to Zionism. This plurality is reflected in the actors' multilingualism and the fluid nationality terminology in the CEMLA records,[11] while the post-emigration historiography mainly mentions the *Rodeslis* as a derivation of broader groups such as *Sefardis, Otomanos, Turcos* or Mediterranean.[12]

[5] Ibid, p. 218.

[6] Bejarano, Margalit; Aizenberg, Edna (2012): Introduction. A mosaic of Diverse Identities. In: Ibid (eds.): Contemporary Sephardic Identity in the Americas. An Interdisciplinary Approach. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, p. xiii–xxii, xiii; Gutkowski, Hélène (1999): Erase una vez... Sefarad. Los Sefardíes del Mediterráneo. Su Historia Su Cultura. Buenos Aires: Lumen.

[7] See the study on Jewish-Argentine women: McGee Deutsch (2010). For a comparative study of the Sephardim in Latin America, see: Rein, Ranaan (2008) (ed.): Árabes y judíos en Iberoamérica. Similitudes, Diferencias y Tensiones. Sevilla: Fundación tres culturas.

[8] cemla.com/buscador/, last access: 02.08.2015.

[9] It is worth noting that Jews represent by far the largest group of migrants on this route, although the phenomenon surely regarded individuals of other confessions as well. As an example, the Greek hairdresser Petros Polemikos had a shop in Buenos Aires as early as 1911. See the ad: „Ellinikon Koureion Petrou Polemikou". In: Nea Rodos 29, 11.01.1911.

[10] Quataert, Donald (2012): The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922 (2nd Ed.). Cambridge: CUP, p. 142–143.

[11] Bejarano notes that the Argentine authorities gave priority to the citizenship recorded on the passport instead of ethnic or religious labels. See: Bejarano, Margalit (2008): Los turcos en Iberoamérica: El llegado del *millet*. In: Rein, Ranaan (ed.): Árabes y judíos, p. 39–58, p. 40.

[12] The last is found mainly in: Mc Gee Deutsch (2010).

The host society also presented a complex pattern of integration and segregation within the Jewish population and in regard to non-Jews. Agreeing on Devoto's remark, rather than talking of "culture" as cohesive factor for the immigrants, the stress shall shift to the voluntary attempts to "recreate an ample symbolic identity (…) [and] above all, to reconstruct shared spaces of social interaction."[13] These resulted, for instance, in different degrees of endogamy or neighborhood segregation: It is impossible to deny that Judaism and Ladino were aggregating factors, but at the same time I suggest that this cohesiveness be not postulated. Not only did Ashkenazim and Sephardim in Buenos Aires found their own associations and experience different degrees of integration, but even within the latter we see diversity among Moroccan, Aegean and Syrian Jews. Following Mirelman's claim that the interaction among Ottoman migrant "communities" was scarce until the 1920s,[14] to treat migrants according to their confession, ethnicity or nationality would not lead far in understanding their experience or an identification floating between the background of their native place and the host society. Here is where the concept of translocality, as outlined by Freitag and von Oppen becomes useful, mainly because it tackles the question of how to approach the "*trans*-gression of boundaries between spaces of very different scale and type" and the "(re-)creation of "local" distinctions between those spaces."[15] The émigrés were born, grew up or spent a significant period of their life in a very limited spatial area, the Jewish neighborhood of Rhodes, hosting in average 3000 persons.[16] According to the memories of Salomon Notrica, early Jewish emigrants from the Dodecanese mostly settled in the quite central *calles* 25 de Mayo or Reconquista in Buenos Aires,[17] later moving and joining newcomers around *Calle Olleros* in the *barrio* Colegiales,[18] where most of their associations are until today. As many third of fourth generation *Rodesli* descendants still relate to their ancestors' local background, visit Rhodes for holidays and attend public events related to that city, they display a translocal identification making it a relevant phenomenon. Nonetheless, the aim of this article is not to fix a rigid bipolar tension between the Aegean and the Rio de la Plata, since many migrants arrived in Buenos Aires from other cities, like Vittorio Alhadeff, who left Milan after 10 years to escape racial persecution in 1939. In other cases, people born in Buenos Aires grew up in Rhodes and later on returned to Argentina, like Haim Berro, who spent almost 20 years in the Aegean city.[19] Eventually, this fragmentation suggests the validity of the translocality concept as the movement of many individuals took place in "transient, non-permanent and unordered spaces."[20]

[13] Devoto (2003), p. 335.
[14] Mirelman (1988), p. 207.
[15] Freitag, Ulrike; Von Oppen, Achim: (2010): Introduction. "Translocality": An Approach to Connection and Transfer in Area Studies. In: Ibid (eds.): Translocality. The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective, Leiden and Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, p. 6.
[16] The Italian census of 1922 mentions 3.277 Jews living in the city of Rhodes, of whom 10% approximately in other neighborhoods. Interestingly, this source records 598 Jews as "Emigrated from the Dodecanese." See: GAK DOD IDD 20 1922 21. For 1916, the director of the Alliance school mentions "more than 4000" inhabitants. See report by M. Levy, 11.08.1921, AIU PARIS France X F 18.06.
[17] Interview originally recorded on 09.08.1988. AMIA, Centro Marc Tucnow, 28320, n. 135 CD 20.
[18] Feierstein, Ricardo (2006): Historia de los Judios Argentinos. Buenos Aires: Galerna, p. 238.
[19] File GAK DOD CCRR 1.2.639 1936.
[20] Freitag; Van Oppen (2010), p. 7.

The Historicity of Mobility

Judging from the CEMLA database, the "pioneer" on the Rhodes-Buenos Aires route was the merchant Isaac Capuya, who arrived at the Rio de la Plata in July 1905 at the age of 19.[21] One year later, a report from the AIU School mentions two brothers, Ezra and Saul Alhadeff, leaving Rhodes to join their father active as a trader (*commerçant*) in Buenos Aires.[22] Thus, Argentina attracted *Rodeslis* a few years later than other destinations, like Congo, where settlers opened shops for "indigenous workers"[23] from 1898 and the United States, there are records of *Rodesli* presence in Seattle in 1904.[24] The most common route would bring the migrants from Rhodes to a West European port, where liners departed from either North or South America. Often, the liner would arrive in Rio de Janeiro or Montevideo, where the route was extended until Buenos Aires.[25] After locating the phenomenon in time, we should now turn to the push factors for early emigration from Rhodes. A common narrative refers to the draft in the ranks of the Ottoman Army becoming compulsory for non-Muslims in 1908, although there is no consensus on the real impact of this measure. Ahmad suggests that the Ottoman Jewish elite took the question of military service "more seriously" than other non-Muslim communities and showed sympathy for the Committee of Union and Progress' policies.[26] Ginio provides examples of both "patriotic" loyalty and criticism in the Jewish press towards conscription and stresses the link between the reluctance to serve in the army and emigration,[27] an opinion shared, without adding detailed references, by Bejarano and Aizenberg.[28] The escape from a repressive measure, in fact aimed at redefining integration and citizenship of an Imperial State beyond confessional borders, has been interiorized as a motif by migrants and their descendants, as in Notrica's narration: At first, the interviewee talks about his father Elias leaving in 1907 for escaping conscription. However, reminded that the reform first affected Rhodes in late 1909, he becomes uncertain about the precise date, which leaves some doubts about the real trigger for emigration.[29] I argue that this reform was a factor contributing to emigration, although its weight has been overplayed: Even if reports from the AIU claim that the Rhodian Jews were "terrorized" and "horrified" by the conscription, it seems to have had little impact, as, for instance, only six Jews born in 1883 were drafted in 1910, in comparison to twenty-one Greeks.[30] Moreover, there was no single pattern in the strategies to avoid military service. In the wealthy family of Vittorio Alhadeff, his uncle Asher allegedly opted for "activating" family contacts (i.e. corrupting) of Muslim bureaucrats in Istanbul in order to delete his name from the list.[31] The focus of enquiry should therefore shift from political loyalty to socio-economic issues, and one of the arguments for this assumption is

[21] CEMLA Buscador: „Isaac Capuya."
[22] Report from 28.11.06. AIU PARIS – FRANCE X 18.06
[23] Benatar; Pimienta-Benatar (2000), p. 107–108.
[24] Angel (1980), p. 147.
[25] See a sample of 26 individuals from the CEMLA database in the time span 11.07.1905 - 09.10.1919.
[26] Ahmad, Feroz (2002): The Special Relationship. The Committee of Union and Progress and the Ottoman Jewish Political Elite, 1908 – 1918. In: Levy, Avigdor (ed.): Jews, Turks, Ottomans – A shared history, Fifteenth Through the Twentieth Century. Syracuse: SUP, p. 212–230, 225.
[27] Ginio, Eyal (2011): El Dovér el mas Sànto. The mobilization of the Ottoman Jewish population during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913). In: Grandits, Hannes; Clayer, Nathalie and Pichler, Robert (eds.): Conflicting Loyalties in the Balkans: The Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire and Nation-Building. New York: Tauris, p. 157–181.
[28] Bejarano; Aizenberg (2012), p. xiv.
[29] Interview recorded on 09.08.1988. AMIA, Centro Marc Tucnow, 28320, n. 135 CD 20.
[30] Report by Tagger, director of the Boys School, 30.03.1910. AIU PARIS – GRÈCE I C, 12.
[31] Alhadeff (1998), p. 106–107. Alhadeff claims that absolutely all Jews were subject to conscription, which appears to be an exaggeration in a peripheral context such as Rhodes.

purely chronological: How can one otherwise explain the relevant proportions of the movement as early as 1908, when large groups left Rhodes having kinship connections with "porters, tailors, grocers" in Buenos Aires? [32]

More accurately, Karpat suggests that pull factors such as employment and land acquisition opportunities in South America were more important for Ottoman migrants:

> "[M]any traditional craftsmen and professionals unemployed because their skills had become obsolete" departed at the turn of the century, in the framework of a general change in the urban labor market of many Ottoman provinces, where new, more specialized professionals emerged in the fields of "transportation, banking, insurance, [etc.]"[33]

The lack of career horizons for peddlers, tailors, small shopkeepers combined with the (perceived) abundance of new opportunities are in line with the AIU reports. The director of the Girls School reflected in 1908 on the positive effects of migration for young people "escaping from irremediable poverty of their hometown:" Not only did the phenomenon lower the number of *"misérables*," but made the money value of manpower more decent for those who stayed.[34] A similar remark recurs two years later and stresses the role of kinship solidarity in terms of economic aid provided by the emigrants to their relatives who stayed.[35] This proves how translocality is not only applicable to the movement of people, but also to a flow of capital altering the social space in Rhodes. If we consider the records of the Catholic *Collège*, the most prestigious and expensive school of Rhodes, the number of Jewish students grew from 8 in 1905 to 112 in 1920 (in a time when the Jewish population decreased), whereas the quota of Orthodox and Muslim pupils only oscillated slightly.[36] Thus, the money flowing from overseas could be a relevant factor for upgrading a family's cultural capital.

After the treaty of Lausanne and the international recognition of Italian sovereignty, however, there was a change in terms of citizenship, as most of the Jews in Rhodes opted for the "Cittadinanza Egea", a sort of second class Italian citizenship which nonetheless allowed applying for passports. Thus, emigration bureaucracy became part of the surveillance policy of the Italian *Carabinieri*: The applicant was judged according to political and moral conduct, as was the case for Alberto Levi, who applied in 1935 together with his wife after receiving the working permit,[37] a necessary condition in line with a restrictive immigration law passed in Argentina in 1932.[38] The application resulting in a six-month visa, however, was common to the unemployed, as in the case of the widow Lea Capelluto and her daughter Caden, who emigrated in the same year listed as "housewife."[39]

As to local politics, up to 1936 when Cesare Maria De Vecchi, became Governor of Rhodes and pursued assimilatory policies of "fascistization," many Jews displayed loyalty to fascism, and even some followers of Revisionist Zionism deemed suspicious by the authorities figured out an ideological synthesis between the two political ideas.[40] This affinity regarded the

[32] Report from 16.11.1908. AIU PARIS France X F 18.06.
[33] Karpat, Kemal (1985): The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914. In: International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol. 17 / 02 , p. 175-209, p. 178.
[34] Report from the Boys School, January 1909. AIU PARIS - GRÈCE V E, 23.
[35] Report from the Boys School, 30.03.1910. AIU PARIS – GRÈCE I C, 27.
[36] Diagramme du College. FSC Roma – Rhodes 560.1.
[37] GAK DOD CCRR 2 12 1747 1935.
[38] Devoto (2003), p. 362.
[39] GAK DOD CCRRR 2 12 1822 1935, 2 12 1823 1935.
[40] Clementi; Toliou (2015), p. 59–66.

émigrés as well, especially in Africa, where there was allegedly a large adhesion to the Fascist party among *Rodesli* settlers.[41] No such evidence is available yet for Buenos Aires, but two records of youngsters born there who settled back in Rhodes provide some insight. The already mentioned Haim Berro applied for entering the Youth Fascist Federation (*Federazione Giovanile Fasci di Combattimento,* FGC) in 1936, but at the same time was reported not to be member of an analog organization, the *Gioventù Italiana del Littorio* two years later.[42] Born in the same year as Berro, Raimondo Hanan was expelled in 1937 from the FGC for "indiscipline, uncorrectable behavior and lack of fascist faith:"[43] His expulsion significantly derived from his not wearing the fascist uniform on the anniversary of the beginning of the Ethiopian Campaign, since it coincided with a Jewish festivity.[44] Such ambiguous loyalty might suggest that representatives of the second generation of emigrants could easily, once returned to Rhodes, become integrated in the realm of public sociality. This does not imply that their horizon of expectations was confined to the island, as both Berro and Hanan quickly reactivated their bonds with Argentina, where they returned soon after the promulgation of racial laws against Jews in Italy and Rhodes on the eve of WWII.

This leads to the analysis of emigration as a survival strategy in a period of war and deportation. The main implication of the racial laws in Rhodes was the widespread revocation of Italian citizenship issued after 1919 per governmental decree published on December, 1st 1938 and enacted in April 1939.[45] Reconstructing personal stories becomes difficult in a time in which mobility, often informal or illegal, implied more complex routes and time. It was possible to find nine "certain" arrivals from Rhodes in the CEMLA records from 1939:[46] Although there might have been more departures for Buenos Aires, the city was not the main destination for hasty attempts to leave Rhodes: The *Carabinieri* mentioned issuing 104 passports for expatriation between September and November 1938, mostly for Rhodesia and Belgian Congo. In an attached list containing 49 names, no one was leaving for Argentina.[47] Even if singular since the author belonged to one of the wealthiest and internationally most connected families of Rhodes, the memoirs of Vittorio Alhadeff contain valuable description of wartime emigration. The author, at that time living in Milan, claims that, together with his wife and uncle, he chose Buenos Aires "because of its climate and its language," and immediately considered how to establish a business branch of the prosperous family trade and banking company in Argentina.[48] Travelling in summer 1939 implied many changes from the original route, corrupting railway clerks for a last minute ticket, the fear of the German *U-Boot* during the journey to New York. Nonetheless, the enormous financial capital of his family could provide the best possible comfort even under those hard circumstances.[49] Right upon arrival on May, 21st 1940,[50] Alhadeff and his wife pursued business in a new country whose most

[41] Rahmani (2000), p. 157. This issue is not mentioned by Benatar and Pimienta-Benatar (2000).
[42] GAK DOD CCRR 1 2 639 1936.
[43] "Radiazione". In: *Il Messaggero di Rodi*, 12.10.1937.
[44] GAK DOD CCRR 1 2 643 1936.
[45] Galante (1986), p. 272–275.
[46] CEMLA Buscador: "Maurizio Alhadeff," "Davide Benveniste," "Abner Capelluto," "Davide Capelluto," "Abner Notrica," "Salvador Tarica," "Mose Soriano," " Isacco Menasce, " "Regina de Capina Menasce," "Giovanni Menasce."
[47] GAK DOD CCRR 20 ps 1932, sheet 270 ff..
[48] Alhadeff (1998), p. 231.
[49] Ibid, p. 237–243.
[50] CEMLA Buscador: "Vittorio Alhadeff," "Renia Alhadeff."

striking feature was a spirit of competition, self-fulfillment and egoism, which did not prevent him for expressing his gratitude for the welcoming homeland.[51]

Comparing this experience without serious traumata, losses or professional ruptures to the case of David Galante, allegedly the only survivor of the holocaust currently living in Buenos Aires, a different picture emerges. Born in 1925, Galante had an elder brother, Hiskia, who immigrated to Argentina in 1936 at the age of 24 (recorded as *emplejado*).[52] He and his brother Moshe considered following Hiskia[53] but eventually remained in Rhodes until their deportation in July 1944. After the liberation, Galante returned to his native town but did not bear the grief resulting from the annihilation of the community.[54] Eventually, he rejoined and followed his brother Moshe, who was keen on immigrating to Buenos Aires since he felt that the support from his brother Hiskia could be of great help, and he felt at ease with the affinity between Spanish and "*djhudezmo*" (ladino).[55]

In this example we see family bonds and solidarity in determining the migration to Argentina. Again, corrupting Argentine and Italian port personnel was necessary since the two brothers had no legal travel documents: Hiskia took care of it from Buenos Aires, but the conditions during the journey were far less comfortable than those experienced by Alhadeff, including staying hidden for fifty days in a storeroom eating leftovers handed on by a commissar.[56] Two years after their arrival, they applied for Argentine citizenship, upon which the story of their illegal immigration emerged, resulting in two weeks of prison, an experience for which they felt "humiliated."[57]

Considering the CEMLA records, a proper migratory movement beyond short term mobility appears to fade out in the late 1940s. As we have seen, developments in international politics and state regulation policies surely affected migration throughout the decades, although family connections remained a predominant factor. For this reason it is now appropriate to turn to the demographic side of the issue.

Migration and Family

Combining the CEMLA database with biographies allows for a further differentiation of the narrative. The story of the aforementioned Isaac Capuya is a significant example: After his arrival in 1905, he returned to Buenos Aires in 1915 at the age of 29, taking with him his wife Amada (aged 22 and unemployed) and three children. The age of his children, however, suggests that he had spent at least 4 years in Rhodes after his first stay in Argentina. Interestingly, not only his marital, but also his professional status changed from "merchant" to "day laborer" (*jornalero*) as well as his nationality, now recorded as "Greek", although the island was still officially under Ottoman sovereignty.[58]

The history of Isaak Franco and his wife Rebecca adds on this non-linearity: Isaak moved to Argentina in 1918, stayed six years in the agricultural town of Trenque Lauquen where his

[51] Alhadeff (1998), p. 246–247.
[52] CEMLA Buscador: "Hiskia Galante."
[53] Hazan (2009), p. 21.
[54] Ibid, p. 108.
[55] Ibid, p. 112.
[56] Ibid, p. 113.
[57] Ibid, p. 115–118.
[58] CEMLA Buscador: „Isaac Jacob Capuia," "Amada Capuia," "Moise Capuia," "Roberto Capuia," "Sara Capuia."

brother resided, briefly returned to Rhodes in 1924, where he heard of demand for manpower in the Belgian Congo. After five years in Africa, he moved back to Rhodes with the purpose of getting married but to no avail.[59] Isaak then returned to Argentina and only during a third stay in Rhodes in 1932 he talked to Rebecca's grandparents asking for their consent.[60] However, the pattern of "intercommunal" marriage was not necessarily the most common: Rather than an equal migration for both genders, we observe a clear demographic unbalance in the Aegean island,[61] partly compensated by the immigration of Italian settlers, some of whom married local Jews. In terms of marital status of male migrants, although little empirical material is available, some assumptions regarding the Sephardim hold true for the *Rodeslis*: Devoto speaks of a clear outnumbering of male immigrants (365/100) from the Ottoman Empire,[62] while Mirelman claims that the Mediterranean Jews practiced interconfessional marriage, even if to a minor extent than the Ashkenazim.[63]

The following table from the CEMLA database shows the evolution in a time span of almost forty years:

	1905-1923	**1924-1933**	**1934-1942**
Average age	23	25	32
Single (m/w)	18 (13/5)	22 (17/5)	22 (10/12)
Married (m/w)	12 (8/4)	14 (9/5)	28 (20/8)
Divorced (m/w)	4 (3/1)	0	1 (0/1)
Children up to 15	8	11	10
Total	42	47	61

Table 1. Average age and marital status of Rodeslis at their arrival in Buenos Aires

First of all, the average age at arrival increases progressively. As to the gender quota, after 1934 there emerges a more balanced ratio, deriving most likely from the fact that many married couples fled from the discriminatory laws of 1938. The marital status is diverse in all three periods of time and sees a predominance, yet not an hegemony, of (male) single émigrés until 1933. This evolution was deeply affected by Argentine immigration laws: From 1923 a stricter regulation hampered the immigration of women travelling alone or with children under 15 years of age,[64] and the already mentioned law of 1932 (officially) tied immigration permit to a preexisting working contract.

Unfortunately, analyzing the marriage patterns of the further generations of *Rodeslis* implies relying on qualitative sources only. In his interview, Notrica claims that the synagogue *Templo Chalom,* founded in 1937, played an important role in the mingling of families of different origin that led to intercommunal marriages in Buenos Aires.[65] Before that date, Ottoman Jews had founded a Synagogue and a Talmud Torah in the *barrio* Villa Crespo,[66] but the *Rodeslis* were rather used to private celebration of the prayers at some of the pioneer

[59] Gutkowski (1999), p. 69.
[60] Ibid, p. 61.
[61] Hirschon (2002), p. 302. The Italian census of 1922 reports 214 Jewish men and 465 women aged between 20 and 30 in 1922. See: GAK DOD IDD 20 1922 21.
[62] Devoto (2003), 300.
[63] Mirelman (1988), p. 165.
[64] Devoto (2003), p. 355.
[65] Interview recorded on 09.08.1988. AMIA, Centro Marc Tucnow, 28320, n. 135 CD 20.
[66] See Mirelman (1988), p. 255; Brodsky, Adriana (2012): Educating Argentine Jews: Sephardim and their Schools, 1920s-1960s. In: Ran, Amalia; Axelrad Cahan, Jean (ed.): Returning to Babel. Jewish Latin American Experiences, Representations, and Identity. Leiden: Brill, p. 33-52, p.34.

emigrants' house or by renting a room from the *Sociedad Italiana* in Colegiales.[67] The *Centro Cultural y Recreativo Chalom* was founded in 1929 on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration,[68] and evolved in a proper Synagogue in 1937, but the Jewish Aegean community could not provide its own Rabbis. The prosperity of the cultural center *Chalom* attracted other Sephardim families who came in closer touch with second generation *Rodeslis,* and in many cases a further "boundary" was crossed in the third generation, as many married Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews.[69] Some belonging to the third generation like Marcelo Benveniste or Freddy Berro have four *Rodeslis* grandparents.[70] An exceptional case is Silvia Hasson Hazan ex Menascé's, whose grandparents Felix Hasson and Clara Alhadeff arrived in Buenos Aires in 1911, whose father married a girl from Izmir, and she eventually married a third generation *Rodesli* in Rio de Janeiro.[71]

Migration and Social Mobility

The position of the immigrants in the labor market and the bonds to their family's capital in Rhodes are another crucial aspect for the differentiation of the experience of migration. The picture is again fragmented, also because the terminology related to professions in the CEMLA database varies frequently in the period analyzed.

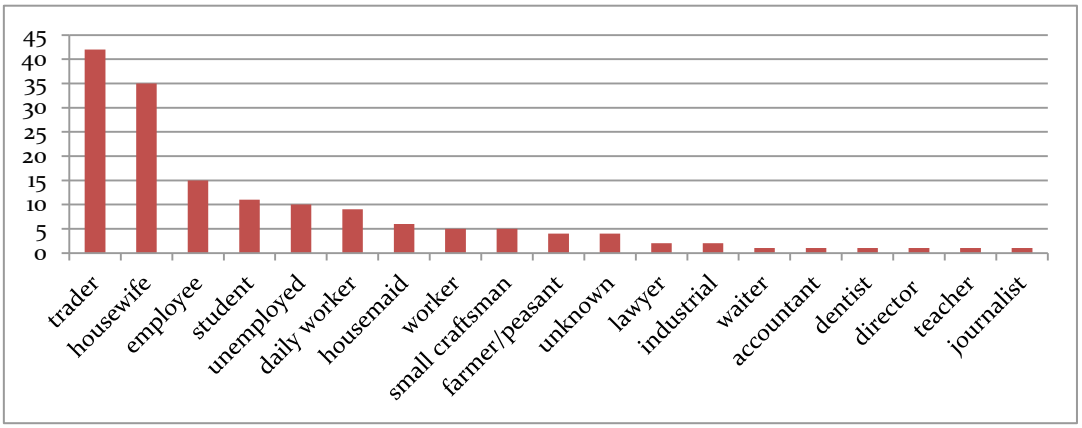

Table 2. Sample of 160 migrants from Rhodes according to the recorded profession, 1905-1960.

Through a diachronic insight, we observe both persistent and changing trends. For example, daily workers are not confined to early migration but represent a significant group well into the 1930s. At the same time, the relative majority of male émigrés consists of traders: Although this profession is hard to subsume under a uniform social category, it can be said that they experienced migration as reinvestment of a capital they already owned in Rhodes. The specialized professionals are clearly a minority, but a closer look reveals that their movement is concentrated in the years after the discriminatory laws against Jews. Moreover, as early as the 1910s many of the younger migrants did not arrive as unqualified manpower but

[67] Memories of Alberto Benveniste and José Menascé. http://www.benveniste.com.ar/rodas/english/communities/chalom.htm, last access: 02.08.2015.

[68] Among the fifteen signatories we see many *Rodesli* , such as Isaak Franco, Menascé, Alhadeff, Soriano, etc. http://www.benveniste.com.ar/rodas/images/acta_chalom.gif, last access: 02.08.2015.

[69] Interview recorded on 09.08.1988. AMIA, Centro Marc Tucnow, 28320, n. 135 CD 20.

[70] Personal communication from Marcelo Benveniste. In regard to Berro see his blog VEOVEO: http://elveoveo.blogspot.it/2011/06/veo-veo10.html, last access: 02.08.2015.

[71] See her posts on the website of the Jewish Museum of Rhodes: http://www.rhodesjewishmuseum.org/museum/family-photos; and http://www.rhodesjewishmuseum.org/whos-going, last access: 02.08.2015.

had received an education in Rhodes, which might have helped enter professions requiring writing and computing skills. Women figure predominantly as housewives, although some earned money as housemaids, or as in the case of Sarina Galante, they had collected work experience before leaving Rhodes and could be listed as "employed."[72] To sum up, such a diverse picture suggests that moving to Buenos Aires was not necessarily the beginning of a new life, but often a strategy to reconverting capital translocally, further pursuing the previous profession.

Notrica notes that "all [early migrants] were working as peddlers" upon arrival, not only in the Argentine capital but as far as "300, 400 kilometers into the interior, into the field(s)," waiting to accumulate enough capital to open their own business or store.[73] As we have seen, this is a generalization probably affected by the perception of "*turcos*" in the local population, who identified them as the prototype of peddlers.[74] Although no émigrés or their descendants belongs to the intellectual or political elite of Argentina, some of them did indeed own a notable amount of economic capital already in the first generation. This is the case of Mois Chami, to whose professional achievements and moral virtues the newspaper of the Jewish community of Rhodes, *El Boletin*, dedicated a praiseful article, an interesting case of how individual success was propagated as "translocal" news. Chami left Rhodes in 1906, became a wealthy entrepreneur in the knitwear industry of Buenos Aires, and showed his taste for living standards by spending a fortune in letting his residence be built in the fashionable modernist style in the upper-class *barrio* of Belgrano.[75]

Conclusion

The article has shown that the migratory movement between Rhodes and Buenos Aires is a complex, multidirectional object of study. Undoubtedly, Argentina was a destination with features comparable to other countries chosen by *Rodeslis* such as the Congo, and that they shared many experiences with other Sephardim in Buenos Aires, although further studies of this kind are needed before drawing proper comparative conclusions. Another important consideration regards the interplay between historical events and migration: Processes like the reform on conscription of the Ottoman army, WWI, and the persecution of Jews in Rhodes by Italian fascist authorities surely determined the flow of people and capital overseas, and yet they cannot be considered as complete ruptures, as kinship bonds together with the pursue of economic interests were just as important throughout the time span analyzed. While the question of shared cultural belonging across generations, its reflections on the social environment, and the extent of integration into Argentine society remained marginal features of this article and deserve deeper investigation, one conclusion is again drawn from the concept of translocality. Knowledge about the experience of Jewish migrants to Argentina becomes valuable and shall be enriched as a "need for localizing some kind of order"[76] only if, at the same time, we admit that the fragmentation, diversity, and temporariness of this phenomenon is too relevant for presenting it as a coherent mosaic.

[72] Gutkowski (1999), p. 55.
[73] Interview recorded on 09.08.1988. AMIA, Centro Marc Tucnow, 28320, n. 135 CD 20.
[74] Avni (1983), p. 270.
[75] "Moise Chami". In: El Boletin, Enero 1935.
[76] Freitag; Van Oppen (2010), p. 8.

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GAK DOD	Genika Archeia tou Kratou, Archeia Notiou Dodekanisou, Rhodos.
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